THE RAGTIMER

NOVEMBER 1969

DECEMBER 1969

PUBLISHED BY

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE
PRESERVATION OF
CLASSICAL RAGTIME

ON

RECORD

LIMITED QUANTITY AVAILABLE

THEY ALL PLAYED RAGTIME

A JUDICIOUS COMBINATION

OF RAGTIME AND RAGTIMERS

SAYS...

A "RAGGITY" TYME

Side One

ONE FOR AMELIA (Morath).....played by Max Morath

FRIDAY NIGHT (Ashwander).....played by Donald Ashwander

BRUN CAMPBELL EXPRESS (Shea).....played by Tom Shea

SILVER ROCKET (A. Marshall).....played by John Arpin

ALASKAN RAG (Joseph Lamb).....played by Joseph F. Lamb

GOTHENBURG RAG (Lundberg).....played by Peter Lundberg

Side Two

PAN-AM RAG (Tom Turpin).....played by John Arpin

CHESTNUT VALLEY RAG (Tichenor).....played by Trebor Tichenor

CALLIOPE RAG (James Scott).....played by Donald Ashwander

MISSOURI ROMP (A. Marshall).....played by Max Morath

BUISINESS IN TOWN (Ashwander).....played by Donald Ashwander

THE GOLDEN HOURS (Morath).....played by Max Morath

JAZZOLOGY JCE -52. Available from The Ragtime Society-WHILE THEY LAST

In Canada and U. S. A. ---$5. 00 ppd. Shipped Overseas---$5. 50 ppd.

RAGTIME...
UNDER YOUR HAT

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY is a non-profit organization for people interested in Ragtime. Services include the publication of this magazine concerned with all phases of classic Ragtime, the printing of sheet music, and maintenance of hard-to-find Ragtime books and folios. We also record on our own label and on associated label, bringing you performances of both old and new Ragtime.

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
EXECUTIVE

John Arpin
Jack Cuff
Jean Cuff
John Fairhead
Allen MacInnes
Idamay MacInnes
Baron McCormick

EDITORIAL

We are more than happy to report that our annual "bash", held on November 1st, was an unqualified success. Our sincerest thanks to our guest of honor EUBIE BLAKE and his wonderful wife Marion for being with us. The turnout was well over double the turnout of last year. We are more than heartened with the outcome of our party and are more determined than ever to carry on with our work. See page 4 for a more detailed account of the proceedings.

Membership renewals for 1970 are coming in and we urge all those who have not gotten around to renewing to do so at their earliest convenience. We are anxious for your support!

Also an appeal is due for subscriptions to the REPRINT CLUB. We feel we are maintaining the high standards of quality of these reprints, yet the number of subscribers fell off a little this past year. See Reprint Club News in this issue for more information.

The executive look forward to a great year in 1970. You can help us by contributing articles etc. for publication in the RAGTIMER. Send us letters outlining your views on ragtime. Ask questions about ragtime. We will publish your letters, thereby stimulating more active participation by others. Help us make the Society your own by being an active member.

In closing, we wish you all a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR filled with peace and opportunity.

See you in 1970!!!!

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RAGTIME BASH

Each year has seen the get-together party of the Society enlarge on the previous year. This year proved to be an explosion in attendance and enthusiasm with more than 200 members, their friends and special guests crowding the facilities of the Bayview Country Club at Toronto where the party was hosted by Society supporters, Mr. and Mrs. Doug Young.

The party proceeded in the informal manner that has always produced its characteristic charm. Two pianos in juxtaposition established the focal point for the steady flow of entertainment, and changing performers, that began slowly at first during the late afternoon and built steadily throughout the many hours which followed.

As might be expected, activities got underway with a two-piano rendition of "Maple Leaf Rag". This was done by Tex Wyndham from Pennsylvania and Jack Cuff of Toronto. Tex carried on alone with a fine set of classic rags to the delight of the ragtime purists.

Eli Kaufman from Buffalo, performed a set of rags on the banjo in a melodious fashion that is nowadays seldom heard. He was accompanied by Tex Wyndham.

Clarinetist Henry Cuesta attended the party and along with John Arpin, paid musical homage to the Society's guest of honour - Eubie Blake. The Cuesta-Arpin collaboration produced some exciting and exhilarating moments as their choice of numbers soared toward a special arrangement of Eubie's "Memories of You". They received an audience response which identifies the kinds of artistry that no one wished to follow.

Fortunately it was time for the tasteful supper buffet which also provided an opportunity for conversation and table visiting.

At the conclusion of the social period, the highlight of the evening occurred when Eubie Blake accepted an invitation to take over the Steinway Grand. His wife, Marion, was also present and beamed her smiling approval. The magic of Eubie's showmanship pervaded the entire room. His intermittent talks about his music and his experiences, interspersed with playing piano solos, and breaking into his renewed talent of singing to his own full-accompaniment, made his participation in the party a memorable one. His performance of "Charleston Rag", which he composed exactly 70 years ago, made it clear he is still in top form. He played several numbers from his newly released Columbia album "The Eighty-Six Years of Eubie Blake". In addition, he played compositions that had not been needed in the production of the album. A standing ovation came at the end of a generously full performance by this giant of the musical world. To mark the occasion, a suitably engraved silver tray was presented to Eubie in the name of the Society by its chairman, John Arpin.

With the need to cool down at this point, the opportunity was created to conduct a short-term sale of records. A limited offering of the new Eubie Blake album was snapped up in a matter of minutes. In turn, our good friend Eubie found his autograph in popular demand. His response was as immediate as it was gracious. The general movement of other records indicated that the sale provided a convenient service to those present. The Jazzology record "They All Play Ragtime" was a brisk seller as was John Arpin's new Columbia record "Ragtime Piano".

The party began to free-wheel with the gathering at the Pianos of our loyal Detroit contingent. A band was quickly formed around a rotation of pianists playing mostly in tandem. Tom Shea, Kerry Price, Mike Montgomery, all took a turn and were joined on piano by Jack Cuff and Tex Wyndham. When not on one of the pianos, Tom Shea was providing rhythm on his banjo, Kerry Price was giving out with her fine vocals, and Tex Wyndham played cornet. Walt Gower, as always, excelled on the clarinet. Rounding out the band was the added and talented musicianship of two tuba players and a trombonist. During this session, many of the good old songs of the ragtime era were given the full treatment. "When Ragtime Rosie Ragged the Rosary" was a well received example. It was a fun period that held an appreciative audience.

This was followed by more classic ragtime. John Arpin played a set of rags in keeping with traditionally idiomatic standards. At the conclusion of his set he was joined briefly by Tex Wyndham in some two-piano ragtime.

David Jasen from New York then played some piano solos which demonstrated his highly developed mastery of the eastern "Stride Piano" style of ragtime. He brought a happy glow to the smiling face of Eubie Blake as he launched into a whirlwind rendition of Eubie's "Charleston Rag".

The piano sets wound up with the Society's own recording star Charlie Rasch from Michigan, whose contagious style of playing quickly ringed him with a solid wall of fans - so much so, that little room was left for "Sister Kate" Ross and her banjo to join him for their closing act. Their performance met with boisterous applause.

With the evening moving to an inevitable end, an instrumental group which had been gradually forming a secondary party in the outer lounge returned to position "one" for the ride-out jam session. Everyone who had brought forth an instrument and everyone disposed to perform got into the act. The audience was forgotten as the color of after-hours music took over.

To sum up in the acceptable one word description, the party was a "gas". Visitors from many American states, notably New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Missouri and even Florida, did much to swell the local ranks and to add to the success. The press was well represented. There are always those who take part in some way who accidentally receive no mention, but their efforts are nevertheless appreciated. The Committee work of Baron McCormick, the Tudors, the Fairheads, the Arpins, the Cuffs and the MacInnes's all contributed to an enjoyable party. Our only regret is that too many of our members reside at distances too far away to permit attendance on any regular basis at our annual parties.

The 1969 Bash will not be easy to match or surpass in future years.

This article is from the August 8, 1969, issue of the Los Angeles Times.

RAGTIMER'S HEROS OF YORE

by Leonard Feather

"People say I'm drunk all the time," said Jamie Hubert (Eubie) Blake, "because I stagger. People are quick to say musicians are drunkards. You'd better tell them -- I don't drink anything. It's my arthritis."

Eubie Blake's arthritis is a minor handicap. At a party held recently in his honor, he had a southpaw handshake for everyone, but the right hand came miraculously to life when, later in the afternoon, he was persuaded to sit at the piano and play a few of his own compositions.

He didn't get around to "Charleston Rag". After all, he wrote it in 1899 and nobody can be expected to have total recall.

Eubie can safely claim to be the senior ragtime pianist among that dwindling breed. He was born Feb. 7, 1883, in Baltimore. His mother disapproved of all secular music, but around the turn of the century "little Hubie" was skipping out, putting on long pants, jumping over the back fence and playing far into the night at Aggie Shelton's house-of-considerable-repute in the Tenderloin.

He soon outlived those salad days to become a respected vaudevillean, teamed with Noble Sissle, who was his songwriting partner in "I'm Just Wild About Harry", "Love Will Find a Way" and the other hits that kept the all-black revue "Shuffle Along" on Broadway for 18 months in 1921-22.

Trim, alert and delightfully garrulous, Eubie Blake today is an unquenchable fountain of memories. Ask him about some long-forgotten musician or song, and he will find a link that binds him to each segment of the past: "Sure, I remember writing 'Poor Jimmy Green' -- that was the week after Battling Nelson took the lightweight championship from Joe Gans in 1908."

Who was the kingpin of them all? "Well, Art Tatum was out there by himself, of course, but the greatest I ever heard was One Leg Willie. Willie's mother worked for some very rich white people, so they sent him to Boston Conservatory; he was a concert pianist and the only Negro to graduate from his class. His name was Willie Joseph; he was an expert skater and he fell and had to have his leg amputated.

"One Leg Willie and me, we'd go to somebody's house to play, and he'd start something classical and they'd say 'Come on man, play something boogie.' He got disgusted and changed from classics to ragtime. In those days Negro musicians weren't even supposed to read music. We had to pretend we couldn't read; then they'd marvel at the way we could play shows, thinking we'd learned the parts by ear.

"The only arrangement I ever copied from anybody was One Leg Willie's 'Stars and Stripes Forever'. He did it in march time, ragtime and '16", which was later known as boogie-woogie. He played it at contests in Tammany Hall and the old Madison Square Garden, then brought down the house with it at a huge competition organized by the Police Gazette.

Having outlived the ragtime craze, which began to fade a half century ago, Eubie Blake has survived all but a couple of his contemporaries.

His income from ASCAP keeps him going, along with an undimmed interest in the spinning-wheel music world around him. Recently John Hammond, Columbia Records' pioneer talent scout brought him into the studio to record a double-LP album, his first in years. Noble Sissle rejoined him for some of the vocal numbers; the rags are played solo.

Eubie, who recently took the train back to New York after visiting old friends in Los Angeles, will be wheeling his way back west in December. "Stanley Adams, the president of ASCAP, has invited me to be the guest of honor at a banquet. I'm the second oldest member of ASCAP. The oldest is Rudolf Friml, and the party will be for his 90th birthday.

"Now, before I forget it again, let me play that 'Baltimore Toddle-O' for you."

He sat at the upright piano, and suddenly the California sunshine vanished. It was dark, the light turned red, and Eubie, a small boy in borrowed long pants, was back at Aggie Shelton's moonlighting from high school.

I blinked, and there was the old man, his arthritic hands skating over the keys like One Leg Willie's over the ice. He finished the number, turned to the small circle of friends, and smiled.

"Now," he said, "let me tell you about this fellow Jimmy Green, the syncopating march king. When I was in Baltimore in 1896--no, wait a minute, that was 1895 . . . ."

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THE EXECUTIVE OF THE RAGTIME SOCIETY WISHES TO CONVEY TO ITS MEMBERS, THE SINCEREST WISH FOR A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A MOST PROSPEROUS AND SYNCOPATED NEW YEAR.

RECORD REVIEW

by TEX WYNDHAM

Jazzology JCE-52 'They All Play Ragtime'

Selections: One For Amelia (1), Friday Night (2), Brun Campbell Express (3), Silver Rocket (4), Alaskan Rag (5), Gothenburg Rag (6), Pan-Am Rag (4), Chestnut Valley Rag (7), Calliope Rag (2), Missouri Romp (1), Business In Town (2), The Golden Hours (1).

Played By: (1) Max Morath, (2) Donald Ashwander, (3) Tom Shea, (4) John Arpin, (5) Joseph F. Lamb, (6) Peter Lundberg, (7) Trebor Jay Tichenor.

Available in monaural only @ $4.98 postpaid from Jazzology Records, P. O. Box 748, Columbia, South Carolina 29202.

This Lp of ragtime piano solos, consisting entirely of composition printed in the current edition of 'They All Played Ragtime', has been in the planning and production stages for some time, and it is a pleasure to report that the result not only meets, but easily exceeds, the high expectations that were held for it. Briefly stated, it is the finest Lp of piano ragtime to be produced in this country in recent memory.

In general, the tunes are being given their first recordings and, as most of them are performed by their composers, one can safely assume that these are definitive versions. (The only tunes not performed by their composers are rags written during the classic period by some of ragtime's greatest names: Tom Turpin's 'Pan-Am Rag', James Scott's 'Calliope Rag', and Arthur Marshall's 'Silver Rocket' and 'Missouri Romp'.) Thus, if you have been attempting to play some of the trickier tunes published in TAPR, you'll find these delightful performances a helpful guide.

Moreover, if you have not yet purchased any of the excellent ragtime Lps produced by the Ragtime Society, you'll find this Lp a good sampler for that series. As the Society's reviewer, I have tended to avoid reviewing these records - principally because the unqualified praise that these records deserve would, if coming from me, probably evoke charges of favoritism. However, Shea and Arpin each have two full Lps of their work offered by The Ragtime Society, and Morath and Tichenor one each; the high quality of their tracks on this Jazzology Lp is fairly representative of the Society recordings and if you like this one, as you will, you're sure to want the others.

Perhaps the most interesting work on this Lp is turned in by the country's best-known professional ragtimer, Max Morath. In recent years, this versatile entertainer has established a reputation as a performer of all types of music from the pre-

jazz years, and much of his currently available recorded work, while thoroughly delightful, contains relatively little in the way of piano ragtime. On this Lp, his three tracks are performed in a straight-ahead, crisp, stomping style that shows his ability as a first-rank ragtimer. His two excellent compositions show a tendency for intricate syncopation and unusual harmony; 'One For Amelia', dedicated to Joseph Lamb's widow, is a haunting and bittersweet composition which masterfully evokes Lamb's shade while retaining its originality.

Three tracks are devoted to solos by Donald Ashwander, to my knowledge his first recordings. He digs right in on James Scott's 'Calliope Rag', a relatively uncomplicated tune which gets a spirited performance. On his own compositions, however, Ashwander shows a highly distinctive style, using frequent grace notes, slurs, and unusual accents, marking him as a composer and performer of originality and talent.

John Arpin, one of the most completely skilled ragtime pianists extant, gets two tracks, and both are superb. A highly trained pianist who has a special affinity for ragtime, Arpin is one of the very few performers who has the technique to perform rags with ease at crsp tempos and the background to interpret the rags with appropriate shadings and dynamics. 'Pan-Am Rag' is probably the weakest of the existing Turpin rags (although weak Turpin is still better than first-class efforts of many other composers) and is frankly not up to Arpin's considerable talent. Marshall's 'Silver Rocket', however, is a gem, and Arpin's bright, enjoyable performance exploits all of its possibilities.

The other four tracks are all up to these high standards. Tichenor's 'Chestnut Valley Rag', played in his characteristic 'country' ragtime style, will be particularly appealing to those who like fast, raggedy ragtime of the type found in Charles H. Hunter's compositions. Tom Shea's 'Brun Campbell Express', probably a reissue of the same performance appearing on Ragtime Society RSR-2, demonstrates that Shea has capably done his homework on the Campbell style. Lundberg's track, while well performed, has a slightly muffled sound which, as Rudi Blesh mentions in his liner notes, adds a romantic and foreign atmosphere which is quite in keeping with the spirit of 'Gothenburg Rag'.

Finally, we have a performance by Joseph F. Lamb, the last surviving member of ragtime's 'big three' composers. Presumably, this track is a reissue from the now-deleted Folkways Lp, FG 3562, devoted entirely to Lamb. Despite the fact that Lamb's skill had been somewhat diluted at this recording by advancing age and impaired hearing, his track stands up well even in comparison with the other fine work on this record. In particular, Lamb's 'Alaskan Rag' is a masterpiece, every bit as good as the rags he wrote during the classic period.

Well, there you have it. I could go on at some length about this fine Lp, but the truth is, this is one of the few essential ones. If you're starting your ragtime collection, I know of no better Lp to begin with than Jazzology JCE-52. If you don't like it, you don't like ragtime.

The following was taken from "Variety" Magazine October 29, 1969.

EUBIE BLAKE, 86, STILL SWINGING IN COLUMBIA ALBUM

Eubie Blake, a prolific songwriter whose work spans every genre from ragtime to showtunes, is now 86 and is still hitting the 88s like he was 18, as evidenced in a double-platter Columbia LP titled "The 86 Years of Eubie Blake," produced by John Hammond. Blake's keyboard attack is extraordinarily vigorous on the first two sides where he swings a group of great old rags, many written by himself. His vocal on "Eubie's Boogie" is standout and his version of "Stars and Stripes Forever" makes a nifty contrast to Vladimir Horowitz's workover of this Sousa standard.

Blake's 55-year collaboration with lyricist Noble Sissle is marked in their duet on "It's All Your Fault," a number which they wrote for the late Sophie Tucker. Sissle also joins Blake in a sparkling vocal duet of a "Shuffle Along" showtime medley, including "Gypsy Blues" and "If You've Never Been Vamped by a Brown Skin". Blake, in addition does a piano solo on one of the best-known Blake-Sissle numbers, "I'm Just Wild About Harry." Blake also gives a double-barreled version of "Memories of You", a number which he wrote with Andy Razaf.

Herm.

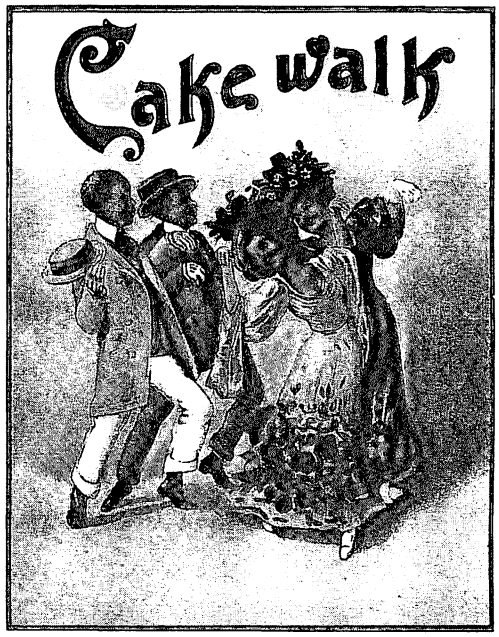
Our record reviewer, Tex Wyndham, will be commenting on Eubie Blake's latest album in a future issue.

"C A K E W A L K"

A LIMITED OFFER

We have acquired a limited quantity of colourful "cakewalk" pictures.

The pictures are 3 3/4" x 5" mounted on a heavy matt 8" x 10". These would be a suitable addition to your den or recreation room.



REPRINT CLUB NEWS

The last mailout in Chapter V of the Reprint Club is ready to be mailed. This will be a combined Mailout consisting of ten rags, bringing the total of compositions mailed out this chapter to 24.

Some real finds are in this group of rags. "Rialto Ripples" should create a lot of interest. George Gershwin, a young man at 19 years of age, collaborated with Will Donaldson to create a solo that is second to none. For 1917, there are some startling harmonic changes which contain real Gershwin flavour. There is a slight touch of "Summertime" in the accompaniment of the first strain. Some may recognize this first strain as "Oriental Blues", a number used as the theme on the old Ernie Kovacs show, although someone called Jack Lawrence is given credit as composer, in a 1935 copyright.

"Vanity Rag", of course, is an interesting number mainly because of composer, Paul Pratt. However, the second and third strains have little syncopation.

A real sleeper is "Rube Bennett's Raggedy Rag". This number has some novel chord changes and should prove to be a worthwhile solo for you piano fiends.

It has been some time since we've issued a George Botsford rag. "Texas Steer" is one of his best, containing some infectious syncopation and a good matching of strains. Look forward to more Botsford rags in Chapter VI of the Reprint Club.

Fred S. Stone, the Detroit band leader, has been represented before in the Reprint Club (i. e. Sue and Ma Ragtime Baby). This one, "Belle of the Phillipines" from 1903 and published by Whitney, Warren in Detroit, has a charming appeal and is fun to play.

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" Rag is another fine number from the pen of Harry Austin Tierney. This tune has a real fine trio in the true American cakewalk style.

We have had numerous requests to reprint "Smiles and Chuckles" Rag One-Step by F. Henri Klickmann. Here it is! A real fun rag featuring the odd trickly left hand syncopation.

The females of rag writing have not been forgotten. "Horseshoe Rag" by Julia Lee Niabergall is a real dandy. Not only a melodious composition, but one to have in your repertoire as a real crowd pleaser. Last 4 bars of the trio is a touch of "Creole Belles".

Cake "eaters" as well as "walkers" will love "Angel Food", a rag by A. F. Marzian.

Last but not least, a very popular rag from 1908 by Jean Schwartz, "The White Wash Man". This number has always been a favorite with banjo players. It is a fine piano solo with many melodic moments.

This mailout should be proof enough that we're trying to acquire for you Reprint Club members the finest available rags for your collection and performing pleasure. We want you back with us for Chapter VI for the many fine surprises we have in store. See you in 1970!

LETTERS

Letters are welcome from members. We will attempt to answer questions pertaining to ragtime in this column. Full address of correspondent will be printed unless requested otherwise.

In answer to a question about a Fred Van Eps album in the May/June issue Lewis Green writes;

.... Van Eps banjo 78 RPM album with Maple Leaf Rag--Oriole, etc. can be had through-----Dr. Robert Thornburgh
1066 Atlantic Ave.
Long Beach, Calif. 90813

Lew Green

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Excerpts from 2 letters written to us by member Robert McGrath:

----At present I am working as a lay missionary on an Indian Mission in South Dakota. I am what is known as a house father to the little boys up to the fourth grade. On the way out here I grew a beard and dressed like a hippie . The boys loved it so much that I decided to keep up the role. They call me the "Catholic Hippie" .
-----I would like to see more people interested in the poor situation of the Indians. Possibly you might advertise in the newsletter a request for used or old musical instruments that can be sent through the mail, especially guitars (any kind). The kids have their own band but need more guitars and many kids would love to play a musical instrument. I would be most appreciative for this. Thanks, and I enjoy reading every bit of the Ragtimer.

Sincerely,
Bob McGrath

SOMETHING DOING...

JOHN ARPIN - appearing at Sutton Place Hotel (Stop 33), Bay and Wellesley in Toronto between 5:30 and 8:00 p. m.

DON BURNS - appearing in Hamburg, New York.

JOHNNY MADDOX - at the Cherry Creek Inn - Denver until January 10.

KEN MAYHERCY - "Ragtime $ Bill" at The Inn - Steamboat Springs, Colo.

MIKE MONTGOMERY-at the Dakota Inn, Rathskeller, Detroit, Friday and Sat. nights.

MAX MORATH - His off Broadway Show "At the Turn of the Century" is on the road.

KERRY PRICE - at the Red Garter, Detroit, Saturdays.

CHARLIE RASCH - at Anchor Inn, Portage Lake, Mich.

LOWELL SCHREYER-at Michael's Gay 90's Restaurant (banjo) Saturday nights in Mankato, Minn. (He has been here for 7 years).

BOB SEELEY - at Little Caesar's Pizza Parlour No. 2, 32905 Northwestern Hwy., Farmington, Mich. - Thursday through Sunday nights with Ron Henkel on banjo.

TREBOR TICHENOR- and the St. Louis Ragtimers, can be heard on the Golden rod Showboat in St. Louis, Missouri.

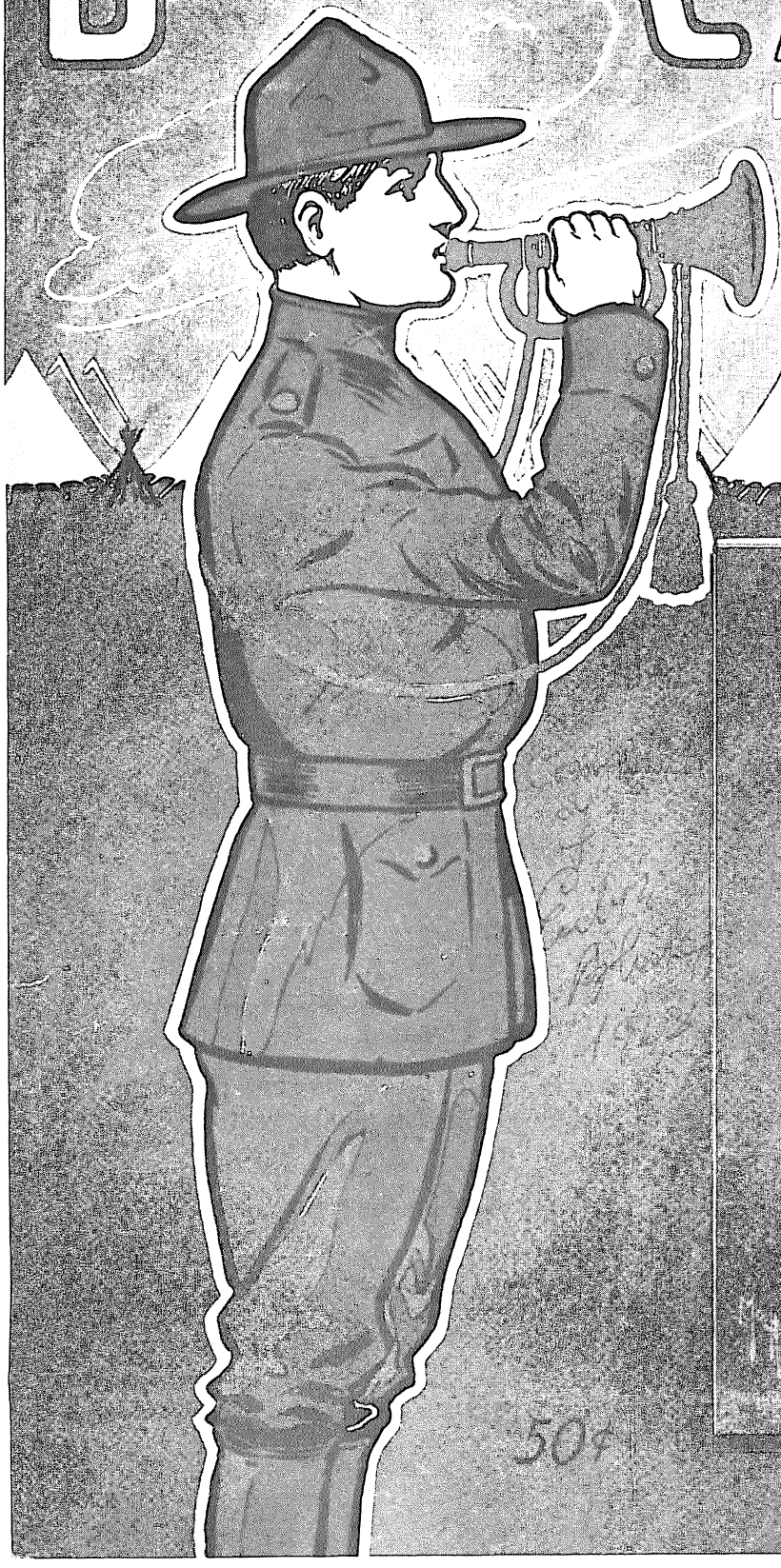
TEX WYNDHAM - and the Red Lion Jazz Band; at Tylers Restaurant, 1101 Philadelphia Pike, Wilmington, Del.

PERFORMERS: Please keep us posted on your whereabouts and your schedule will appear in this column.

BUGLE CALL RAG

Fox Trot

BY J. HUBERT BLAKE
AND CAREY MORGAN



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